

**COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION PLAN
FOR THE NANTUCKET REGION
2020**

APPROVED JUNE 17, 2019

Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission
2 Fairgrounds Road, Nantucket, Massachusetts 02554
(508) 325-7587

NANTUCKET METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
ENDORSEMENT OF THE
COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN
FOR THE NANTUCKET REGION

Signatory Certification:

Stephanie Pollack, Secretary of Transportation
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Date

Jonathan Gulliver, Administrator Highway Division -
Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Date

Nathaniel Lowell, Chairman
Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission

Date

Summary

Federal transportation law requires the development of a Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation plan. This plan is intended to identify needs and gaps in human services transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Nantucket County. The plan will be used to direct Federal Transit Administration funds allocated by MAP-21, specifically *5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities*. All federal section 5310 funding must be consistent and in keeping with the findings, goals, and objectives outlined in this plan.

Human service transportation in Nantucket County is available community wide and accommodates seniors 60 years of age and older and all types of disabilities. According to the latest Census estimates, Nantucket has a similar portion of the population 60 and over to statewide totals (21% locally versus 21.7% statewide). However, there are slightly less than average portion of the population with disabilities (9.7% locally versus 11.6% statewide). Since there are individuals who are senior, disabled, or both in the region, improvements will have substantial benefits for those who currently or will use these services.

To identify needs, information from the Census/American Community Survey, Nantucket Regional Transit Authority (NRTA), and public comments from a 2012 public outreach campaign by the NRTA were used. Since the NRTA is the only provider of human service transportation, coordination and planning involved in allocating these funds involve consultation between the NRTA and NP&EDC staff, NRTA Advisory Board, and local committees with a mission of identifying and advocating for the needs of the elderly and disabled, such as the Council on Aging, Commission on Disabilities, Human Services Director, Elder Services Director, and the Nantucket Healthy Community Collaborative.

The identified needs are listed below and align with the goals established in this plan:

- Weekend demand response service
- Evening demand response service
- Replacement of demand response vehicles
- Sidewalks linking fixed route stops to origins/destinations
- Bus shelters at fixed route stops

The application process for Section 5310 funds is facilitated and distributed by Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Applicants for the funds are identified as sub-recipients and should reference the goals identified in this plan when applying for funds.

Introduction

The purpose of the region’s Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation (CHST) Plan is to identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and those with lower incomes, and to identify and prioritize strategies for meeting those needs. The primary reason for this goal is to promote transportation equity among those who may otherwise be transportation disadvantaged. This purpose also supports managing resources efficiently and effectively and fostering cooperation among agencies and organizations. Seniors and individuals with disabilities often rely on transportation services to perform daily tasks such as medical appointments, jobs, and shopping. The services include year-round demand response van service and fixed route public transportation.

The CHST plan is not intended to be prescriptive; instead it will identify needs in service to seniors and individuals with disabilities and establish goals for which funding requests must comply. The plan is mandated and supported by the associated funding program, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) that is established in the federal transportation legislation known as Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

Community Profile

Population Projection

Nantucket is located 25 miles off the south shore of Cape Cod in Nantucket Sound. The main island of Nantucket is approximately 45.9 square miles, and is 14 miles long and varies in width from 3 to 6 miles. The appeal of the island as a year-round residence is evident in the Island’s increasing population figures. As illustrated in Figure 1, the island’s year-round population increased dramatically during the past few decades. According to the US Census figures, there were 5,087 residents in 1980, and by 2020 this figure is projected grown to 11,206. Although this level of growth has slowed between 2000 and 2020, the population is still projected to increase in the coming decades.

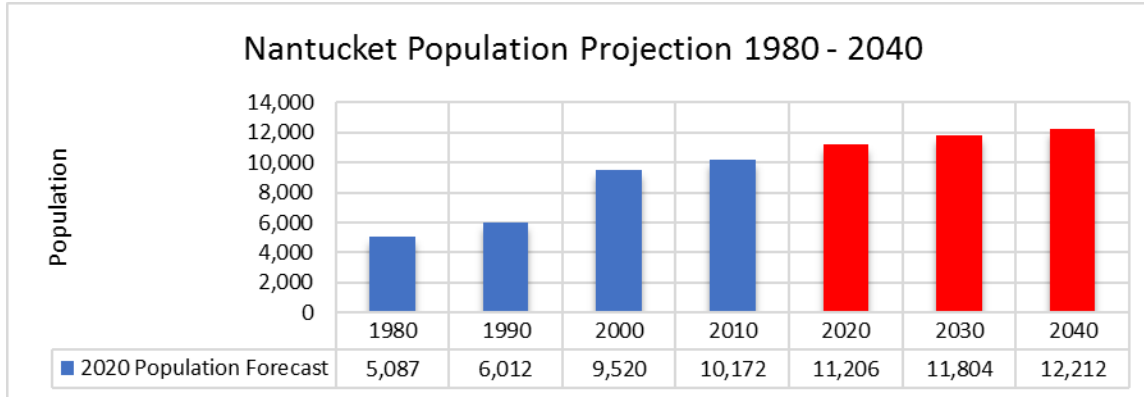


Figure 1. Population Trend and Projection (US Census/UMass Donahue Institute)

Senior Population

In Nantucket County, seniors (65+) make up 14.6% of the population. Although the number of seniors has increased steadily since 1990 (see Figure 2), the portion of the population has fluctuated between 10-20% (see Figure 3). Map 1 shows the location of households with seniors by Census Block Group. It can be seen that most of these households are just west of the downtown area and in neighborhoods along Polpis Road. Although much of this population is located within proximity to downtown or mid-island commercial areas and year round fix route transit, the population along Polpis Road must rely on other means of travel such as paratransit, ride share, and taxis if driving is not an option.

Although many older people live independently, assisted and independent living facilities are available. Transportation and affordability can be a burden for seniors, but is an important need that allows them to participate in community events and activities, get to medical appointments, lunch programs, shopping, and other activities outside their homes.

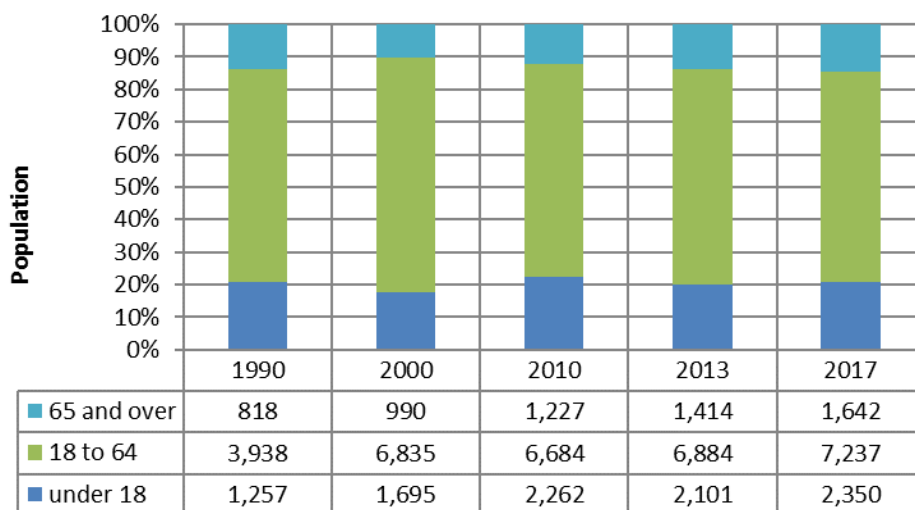


Figure 2. Age Distribution (US Census)

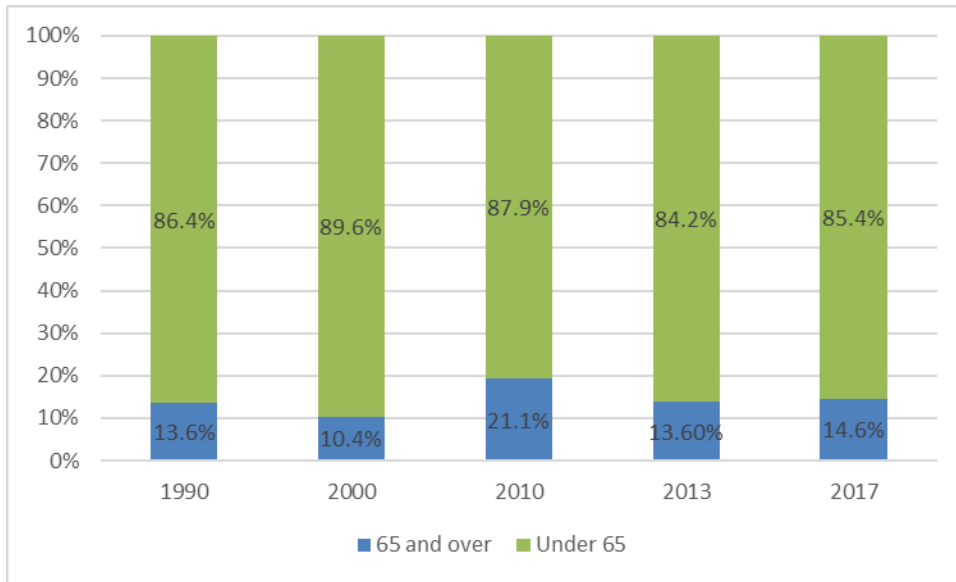
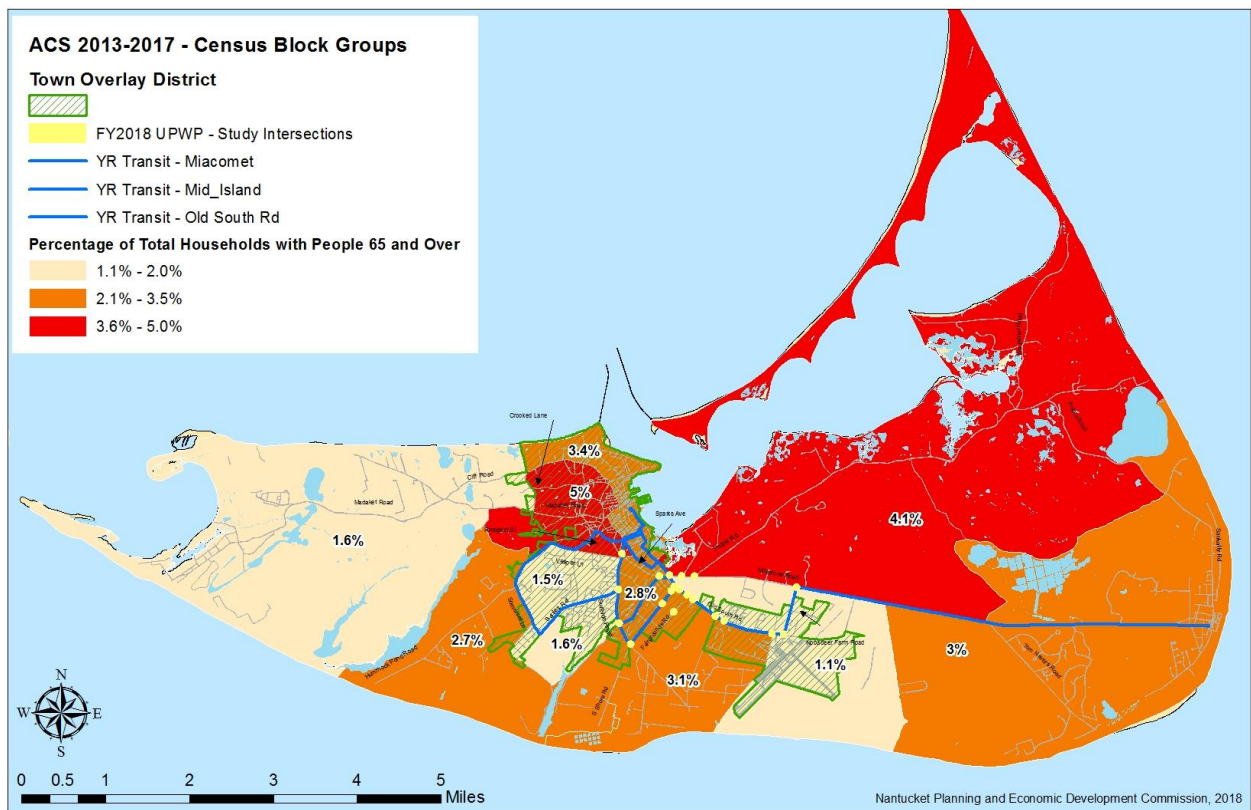


Figure 3. Percentage of Population Over 65



Map 1. Map of Households with People 65 and Over

Disabled Population

The disabled population in Nantucket is made up of all ages. K-12 schools in Nantucket have disability educational programs and supplementary disability transportation services. According to the American Community Survey, the disabled population in Nantucket is 9.5%, which is slightly less than proportional with the statewide disabled population (11.8%). Map 2 shows the location of this population on island, which is generally within the Town Overlay District where commercial services, public transportation, and accessible sidewalks and multi-use paths are located. However, this still shows that there is a demand for accessible transportation services. People with disabilities often rely on public transportation to go about necessary and regular tasks. Expanding human service transportation will allow individuals with disabilities to overcome burdens of limited mobility.

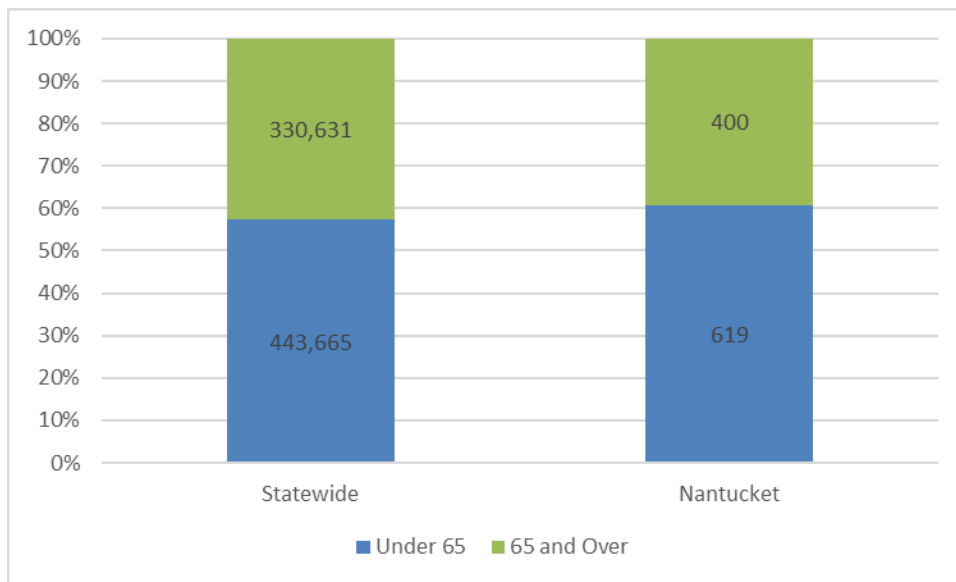
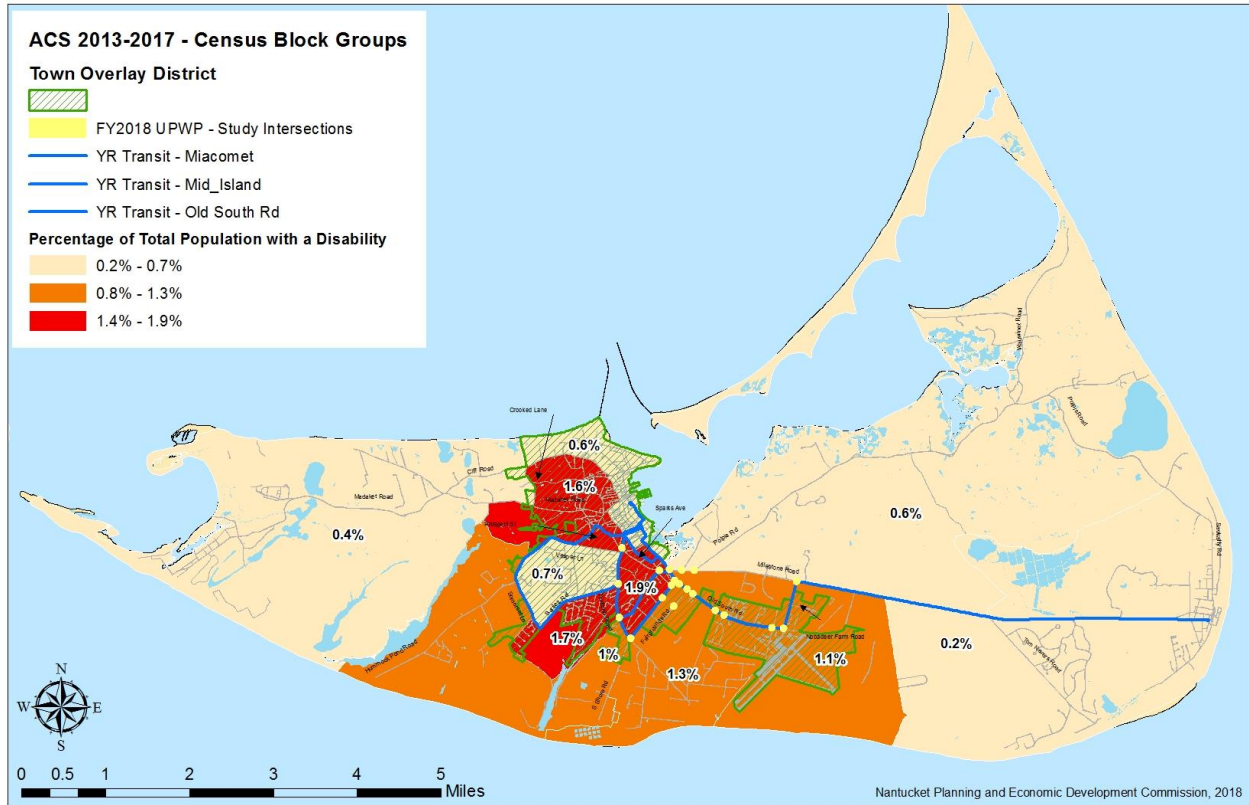


Figure 4. Population with a Disability



Map 2. Distribution of Population with a Disability

Ridership and Vehicle Inventory

RIDERSHIP TRENDS

Ridership data for services provided to elders and individuals with disabilities was provided by the NRTA. Figure 5 below shows the total riders from 2013 and 2018 for demand response, human services transportation, and fixed route services.

The demand response service is an advance reservation door to door van service that is provided year round, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Human service transportation is brokered through the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority and is provided by the NRTA through its demand response service and includes DDS (Department of Developmental Services) transportation and PT1 medical transportation to transport eligible MassHealth members to medical appointments (often requires a doctor’s prescription).

Ridership on the NRTA’s fixed route services comprises many different segments of Nantucket’s population including seniors and individuals with disabilities. All NRTA fixed route vehicles, year round and seasonal, are lift equipped and are in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

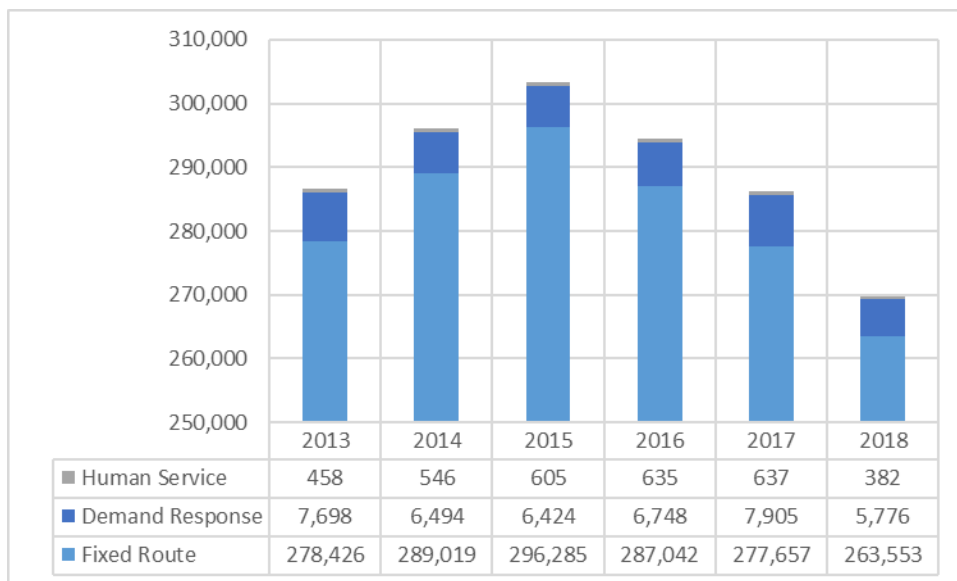


Figure 5 NRTA Ridership

FLEET INVENTORY

The NRTA has 18 fixed route vehicles equipped with wheelchair lifts and four (4) Ford EcoVans that are utilized to provide its elderly and disabled demand response service. With emphasis being placed on State of Good Repair at the Federal and State levels the NRTA has identified a replacement plan for its vehicles through the 5310/MAP program. The NRTA is a sub-recipient of these funds through MassDOT and the competitive grants process.

Below is a description of the NRTA’s fleet of vehicles:

**Table 1. NRTA Fleet Inventory
Fixed Route Buses**

Bus #	Year	Make	Model	Length	Age
1	2018	IC	HC	29	1
2	2018	IC	BUS	29	1
3	2010	IC	HC CB	25	8
4	2016	IC	HCTC	29	2
5	2012	IC	HCCB	25	6
6	2013	IC	HC	25	5
7	2011	IC	HC CB	25	7
8	2013	IC	HC	25	5
9	2018	IC	HC	29	1
10	2018	IC	BUS	29	1
11	2011	IC	HC CB	25	7

12	2011	IC	HC CB	25	7
13	2013	IC	HCTC	25	5
14	2010	IC	HC CB	25	7
15	2013	IC	HCTC	25	5
16	2013	IC	HCTC	25	5
17	2013	IC	HCTC	25	5
18	2011	IC	HC CB	25	7
24	2016	IC	HC	25	2

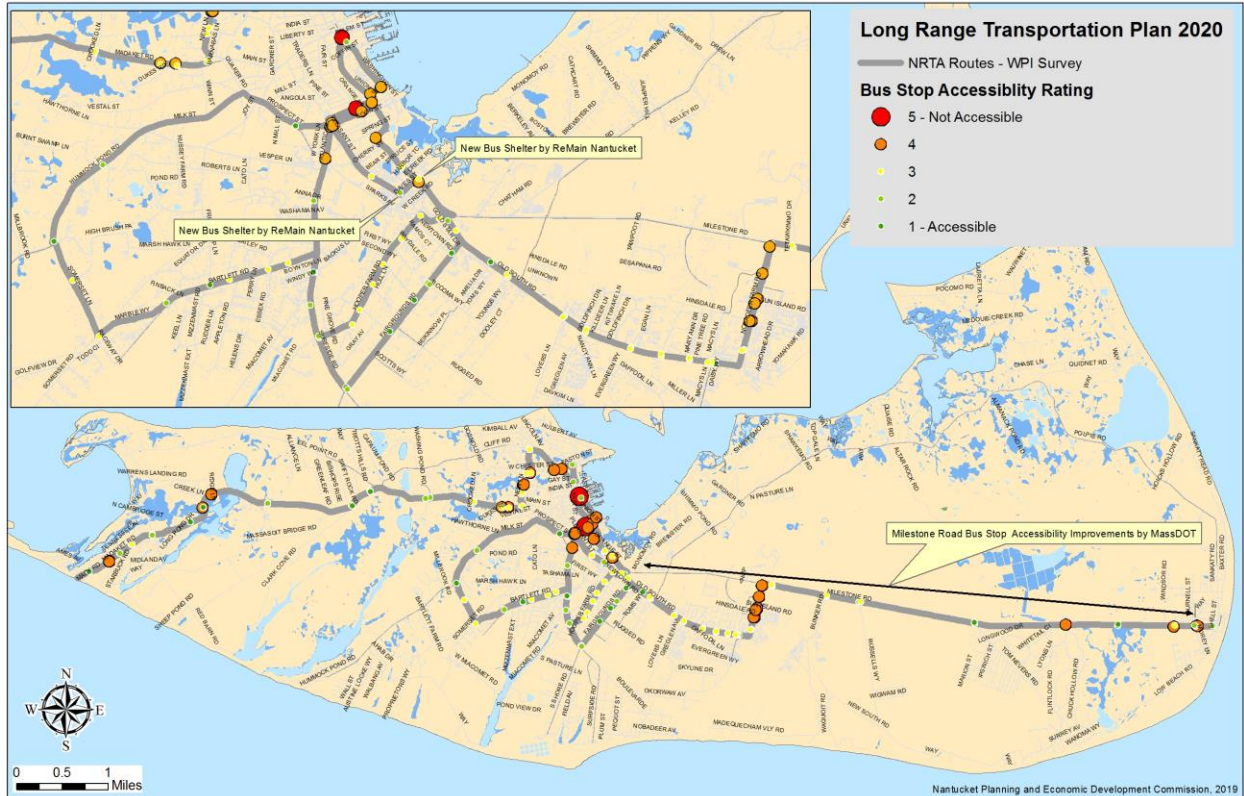
Demand Response Vehicles

20	2015	Ford	CUTVAN	9 Pass	4
21	2009	Ford	EcoVan	9 Pass	10
22	2009	Ford	EcoVan	9 Pass	10
23	2015	Ford	CUTVAN	9 Pass	4

Bus Stop Accessibility

As identified in the 2015 CHST Plan, accessibility to bus stops and bus stop shelters are a need for users of fixed route transit, and help encourage others to use transit more frequently. Based on this need, an accessibility survey of bus stops along heavily utilized routes was completed following approval of the previous CHST Plan with assistance from students of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. This survey revealed that 85% of these bus stops lacked crucial requirements for accessibility. The least accessible stops that were identified were the Orange Street at Dover Street stop and the Washington Street at Salem Street stop. The ratings – 1 for great accessibility and 5 for poor accessibility – are shown in Map 3.

Also based on the identification of needs in the 2015 CHST Plan, bus stop accessibility improvements are being implemented along Milestone Road, and additional accessibility improvements have been conceptually developed along Old South Road and Fairgrounds Road. Bus shelters have also been added to the Daves Street and Landmark House bus stops. Additional improvements will be identified for other locations, and improvements will continue to be part of the capital planning process.



Map 3. Bus Stop Accessibility Rating (WPI)

Stakeholder Coordination

All funding for services provided by the NRTA are reviewed and approved by the Nantucket Planning and Economic Development Commission (NP&EDC) and appear in the NP&EDC’s annual Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). This process ensures coordination among the agencies and ensures that funding for services aligns with regional transportation goals. The NRTA and NP&EDC staff meets with a variety of other transportation stakeholders as part of this on-going planning and program development. In development of this plan, the local stakeholders that were consulted include:

- Council on Aging
- Direction of Human Services
- Commission on Disabilities
- Elder Services
- Nantucket Healthy Community Collaborative

Assessment of Needs

Along with coordination with local stakeholders, results of an elder needs assessment survey of Nantucket residents 60 and older helped inform this plan. The survey was commissioned by the Nantucket Center for Elder Affairs with support from the Community Foundation’s Nantucket

Fund and ReMain Nantucket. The results were included in the January 2018 *Aging on Nantucket: A Community Needs Assessment*. This assessment noted the following transportation needs:

- Improve transportation options available to older Nantucket residents. Nantucket’s downtown area is not “age friendly” when it comes to walkability, parking and access.
 - Explore opportunities to pilot-test the year-round operation of the NRTAWAVE transportation program.
 - Consider designating “senior parking spots” as a way of encouraging older residents and their families to enjoy the downtown areas.
 - Investigate other opportunities to establish programs that will help older adults travel where they need to go, at a price they can afford, and with the flexibility they value. Consider ride-share options and volunteer driver programs.

Summary of Needs Identified

Based on the January 2018 elder needs assessment, and coordination with the elderly and disabled stakeholders to review the previous CHST Plan, the following needs that were identified:

- Investigate other more affordable and flexible transportation options and programs for the elderly and disabled
- Replacement of demand response vehicles
- Accessible sidewalk downtown and linking fixed route stops to origins/destinations
- Bus shelters at fixed route stops

Goals and Objective

The purpose of this plan is the identification of coordinated actions to identify unmet needs in service and establish strategies for more efficient utilization of resources. The followings goals and objectives identify goals for projects related to the assessment of needs. These goals and objectives will provide criteria for the selection of projects using 5310 funds.

GOAL 1: PROVIDE SERVICE TO ADDRESS BARRIERS AND UNMET NEEDS FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED COMMUNITIES

Objectives:

- Investigate other more affordable and flexible transportation options and programs for the elderly and disabled
- Increase the number of accessible parking spaces in the downtown area

GOAL 2: IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Objectives:

- Provide safe access on and off vehicles
- Provide ADA compliant sidewalks in the downtown area and to bus stops
- Provide crosswalks as bus stop locations, as necessary
- Provide bus shelters
- Remove snow and other debris from sidewalks

GOAL 3: PROVIDE CAPITAL EQUIPMENT AT OR ABOVE STATE OF GOOD REPAIR

Objectives:

- Provide and maintain vehicles at or above state of good repair
- Acquire modern vehicles and technical applications
- Acquire modern accessible service equipment

Conclusion

Access to affordable, reliable, safe and timely transportation is an essential component of Federal, State, Regional and Local programs providing employment, medical care and an array of other services for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Expanding these services is essential to accommodation in the described populations. Based on outreach efforts, the identified transportation needs of the elderly and disabled populations are:

- Investigate other more affordable and flexible transportation options and programs for the elderly and disabled
- Continued replacement of demand response vehicles
- Implement accessible sidewalk in the downtown area and to bus stops
- Continued implementation of bus shelters at fixed route stops
- Expand accessible parking opportunities in the downtown area

Applicants for Section 5310 are encouraged to align requests with goals identified in this plan and follow all requirements put forth by the designated recipient, MassDOT, before and after applying. Funds may be used for capital or operating costs. The progress of transportation services will allow them to go about regular tasks, such as visiting the doctor, shopping, attending church services and attending social events, which otherwise they could not do.